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bobbin but it has instead a feminine exquisiteness of texture and a delicacy of pattern which set it apart. The laces of Mechlin led also in popularity but all Flanders as well as a lace making country and the English workers of Devon and Buckinghamshire looked across the Channel to them for inspiration.

The laces have been arranged in Gallery IX under the following general divisions. The eastern division of the room, devoted to Italian point lace, shows the development from reticella through punto in aria and raised Venetian point to a group of eighteenth century laces in the center case. In the central section of the room are bobbin laces; on one wall examples of the Milanese punto di Milano and allied types. The opposite wall shows examples of Flemish work, mostly Brussels. The Flemish laces continue into the westward division of the room and opposite to them are exhibited a group of French products. Miscellaneous pieces are placed in cases on the west wall.

Thus as logical an arrangement has been made as is consistent with effective display, the large number of pieces giving an opportunity for comparative study. Yet they are not only for the serious student. Any lover of the beautiful in design and texture cannot fail to find in them a fruitful source of inspiration.

W. M. M.

## PORTRAIT OF MRS. JOHN THOMSON MASON BY GILBERT STUART

An extremely important addition has been made to the collection of early American paintings in the recent purchase of a portrait of Mrs. John Thomson Mason by Gilbert Stuart. The subject is shown in the full bloom of youth, seated three-quarters to the right in a gilded Empire arm-chair which is upholstered in red velvet. Her reddish-brown hair, parted above a high forehead and worn high upon her head, is decorated with a string of pearls and falls in long ringlets over her temples. With her brown eyes she gazes at the spectator with a self-satisfied expression of saucy haughtiness and assurance. Her face and figure are plump and her complexion fresh in color. She wears pearl ear-rings and her neck is encircled with a string of larger pearls while the low neck and short sleeves of her white gown are generously trimmed with pearls con-

ventionally applied, which also form an edge to her narrow girdle. A filmy scarf of pearl gray tones falls across her left fore-arm and reappears at her right side. Her hands, unadorned except for a wedding ring, lie upon her lap. The central portion of the background is occupied by a large Tuscan column against which the sitter's head is brought into relief and about the column is draped a reddish velvet curtain with grayish-lilac high-lights. At the right a landscape is suggested, above which is a blue sky flecked with sunset tinted clouds. The portrait is on canvas and measures twenty-nine inches in height by twenty-four inches in width.

The picture is somewhat less loosely painted than was Stuart's usual custom and with the exception of the yellow in the frame of the chair and the umber in the eyes, is composed entirely of reds, whites and blues. Great delicacy of brushwork is exhibited and the picture must rank as one of the most important in the Museum. It had for a number of years been loaned by its previous owner to the Corcoran Gallery in Washington where it was the object of much favorable criticism.

Stuart after leaving Philadelphia passed two years (1803-1804) in Washington which had recently become the seat of government, and the portrait of Mrs. Mason was probably painted during the first year of his sojourn there.

Mrs. Mason before her marriage was Elizabeth Beltzhoover, the daughter of Melchoir Beltzhoover, a Hollander who settled in this country during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. No record of her birth or death has come to light but shortly before her portrait was painted she married John Thomson Mason (1764-1824) a member of an influential Virginian family and a nephew of George Mason of Gunston Hall. Early in life he removed to Maryland, where upon his estate of "Montpelier," near Hagerstown, he kept many slaves and had all that accompanied the life of a Southern gentleman of the time. He attained high rank as a lawyer, was for a time attorney-general in Jefferson's cabinet and was defeated for the office of United States senator by only one vote. Mr. and Mrs. Mason had several children, and the eldest son who bore his father's name, inherited this portrait of his mother. From him it descended to his daughter, from whom the Museum purchased it. L. P.



PORTRAIT OF MRS. JOHN THOMSON MASON

By Gilbert Stuart  
Gift of J. H. Wade